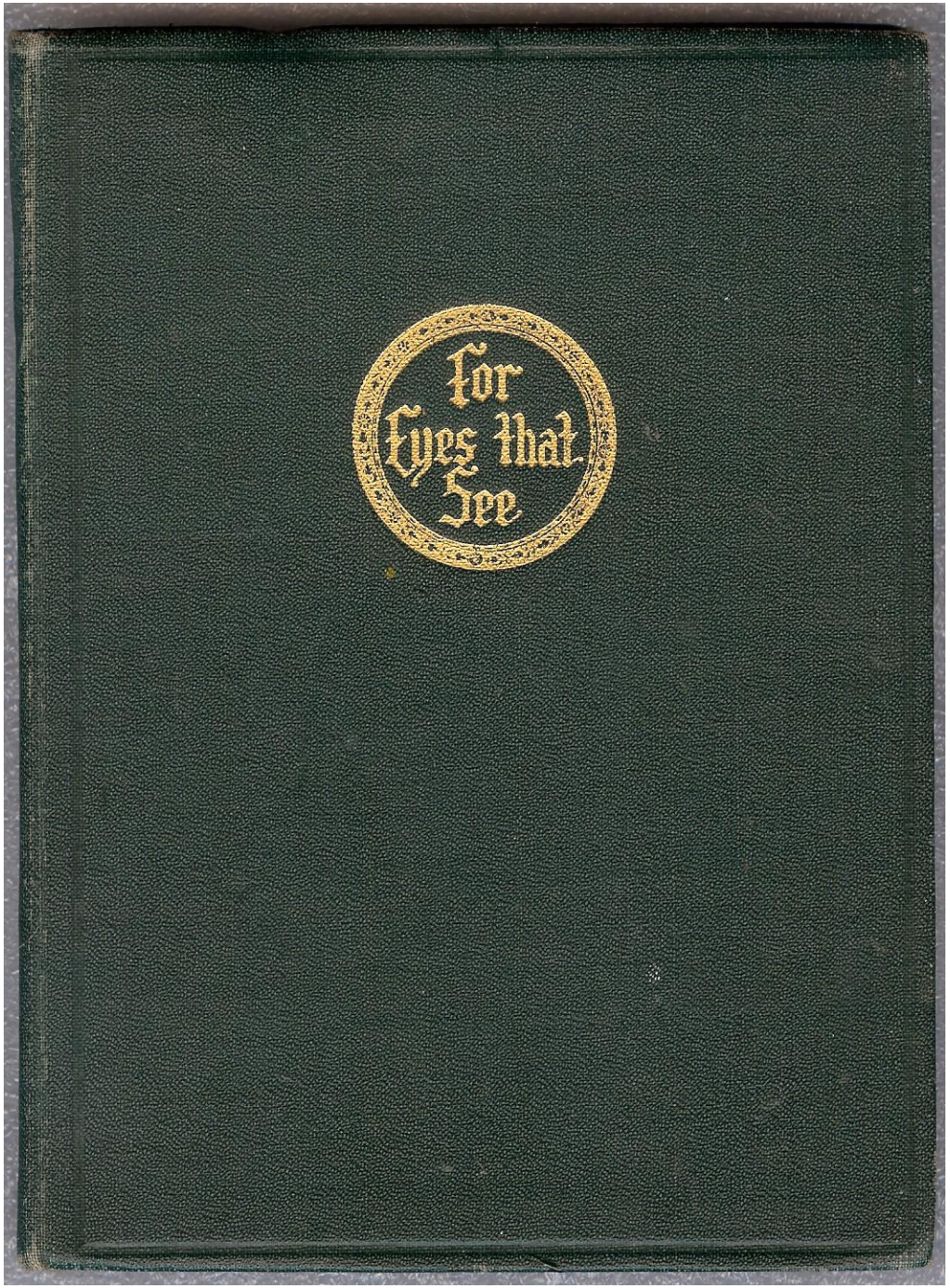
For
Eyes that
See

Steven Reidlinger

To my dear
kind nurse
Anna M. Hanson
June 5th 1976.

For Eyes That See

FOR EYES THAT SEE

ANNA M. JOHNSON

Kansas City
PRIVATELY PRINTED
1945

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ANNA M. JOHNSON
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

Dedication

This little volume of short verses is dedicated to my family and dearest friends whom I love — may it be read with "eyes that see" in the spirit of charity, and full understanding of the necessity which prompted the writings in it.

Foreword

I have read with profit and deep pleasure the poems by Mrs. Anna M. Johnson in this choice collection of verse.

Being an artist of no mean ability it is not strange that her lively appreciation of the wonders and beauty in nature and in all life, her apprehension of God, the Author of all, and her possession of the insight and imagination which give skill to her brush on canvas, should also express themselves through her pen in verse.

There is a naturalness and sincerity in her poems; a freedom and grace of expression; a rhythm and flow which make the reading of them a delight. She has something to say and she says it effectively and beautifully.

John F. Herget
Cincinnati, Ohio

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Looking Inward

The Appointed Time

If I could string the thoughts I've had
Upon a line along the years,
They would go on both good and bad,
And they would bring so many tears,
So many false hopes, petty fears,
'Tis best to keep them hidden fast,
Deny them future, or a past,
Locked in my heart — in the event
They'd bring more bad than good intent.

Hope

Hope is a well, filled to overflowing
With joys created for the Spirit's own;
Out of its depths and ever growing,
Come visions amplified — full grown.

Strength

I dare sit quietly and think!
I dare to challenge hurtful thoughts
To do their worst to my poor heart;
I dare to set my grief apart,
Above all Earthly pain — and think!

Differences

Others have idle chatter,
Friendships, that idle grow;
I am alone — no matter —
Maybe 'twere better so.

Others have aspirations,
Shelving their thoughts from me;
Strange are their innovations;
Brothers we'll never be.

Others are turning slowly,
Watching the way I take;
Perhaps they think 'tis holy,
Perhaps a great mistake.

Touch Not My Hands

Touch not my hands, they are so cold,
so feverless;
They have no pressure soft or bold,
they are expressionless;
They will not yield to love's demands,
nor seek your own;
So touch them not — those little hands
Grown cold — like stone.

To the Departed

All things today seem sad,
Since she has gone;
My heart will not be glad,
Altho' I would not mourn
For one as Heaven-born,
But I'm alone!

Since she has gone I weep,
The tears will flow;
Vain tears — I would not keep
Such signs of grief or woe,
But she is gone!

Despair Who Will

Despair who will — I can but feel that life
Has brought me treasures, joys untold,
And planted them beside the daily strife,
My load — and lightened it an hundredfold.

I know that love for love has eased the pain,
That filtered in some sin-infected spot,
And taught me that to pray in vain,
Is to forget to love — hence rue my lot.

Memory

Thanks for the world of Memory!
Thanks for that little door
That I can open and shut at will,
And hear the voices that tenderly,
Come in and talk to me as of yore,
And feel they are with me still.

The Fourth Dimension

Today I paint a picture fair;
Yes, fairly well some folks agree,
But I'm not satisfied, aware
That artists fame and minstrelsy
Has missed the mark — the unity,
That sets the picture artist free;
The Fourth Dimension comes to be
The best that's in me — don't you see?

Bread For the Soul

Oh, give me a crumb from the rich man's table!
I am begging for bread cast on the waters and able
To nourish my soul in its poverty role —
Bread snatched from the waters of life — oh my soul! —
Or crumbs from under the rich man's table.

Hope

When Hope comes bounding in,
Trailing her golden hair,
Upon the blue-wing'd air,
Her garments floating wide,
Touching her milk-white skin,
Singing her songs so free,
Loudly, exultant, gay —
Great is my joy — maybe,
Hope comes to visit me.

My Thoughts

You sit and watch my thoughts
Go round and round:
A better puppet-show
You have not found
Than these poor things that
Dance and kick and sway
Yet swift and noiselessly
My inner life betray.

Sincerity

I cannot be what I am not,
That were impossibility.
I cannot know what I've forgot,
That is imbecility.

Mental Gymnastics

Mental gymnastics I perform
When thoughts come rolling in,
And try to take my brain by storm;
Upset my small terrain;
I stand like guard at open door,
Who shoves unwanted guests aside;
I heave and crush them by the score,
Obliterate them as they stride
Across my heart's imperilled pride.

O, great gymastics I perform
To save my soul from sin;
To save my mind a mental storm,
I play the game to win.

That "Still Small Voice"

When that "Still small voice" speaks loudest,
It is stillest, it is softest in the human heart;
And when it roars upon the proudest,
It is silent when it rips their pride apart.

When that "Still small voice" awaketh
In winds, in storms, or in the brightest skies,
And when its fierce revenge it wreaketh
Upon the soul in sin, it swiftly dies
To faintest whisperings, and sin defies.

Sense Illusions

Sometimes I have a pain around my heart,
From senses narrow;
Oh, not from Cupid's poisoned dart—
Not from his sinful arrow—

But just a little twinge-like thread
Of twisting fire,
That like a moth plays 'round a light in dread,
Goes off—comes back—seeks death as its desire,
But tries to save itself by circling higher.

I Must By Honesty Be Led

No matter where I have to go,
No matter where my feet must tread,
No matter if in weal or woe,
I must by honesty be led.

Women of Samaria

O Woman of Samaria,
That draweth water from a well,
Show me how deep the current flows.
Where are the hidden springs that tell
Of that great fount that Wisdom knows?
O Woman girt with strength to draw.

Tomorrow

There is no tomorrow;
Tomorrow never comes they say;
Why then so much trouble borrow
From the worries of today?

If there's no tomorrow,
There is not a yesterday;
All there is of joy or sorrow,
Merges in a safe today.

When there comes no shadow
From tomorrow's yesterday,
All there is, or was, or can be,
Finds its present in today.

Remorse

My heart is like a toy horse
Whose rider fired with fun,
Whips up its sides for good or worse,
And tries a race to run.

Some day that toy horse will fail
To feel its rider's joy;
Its silver trapping soon will trail
In dust of meaningless deploy,
For after all 'tis but a toy.

Why Do I Weep?

Do I weep for myself
Or do I weep for the World?
I am not a Christ crucified to death,
Into a furnace hurled
Of Earth's woes, and with parting breath
Commiserating Earth's deficits in love,
While trying immortality to prove—
So I weep for myself;
It may be light grieving,
Selfish, in self-believing.

My Little Black Bag

My little Black Bag packed full and tight
With a robe, and a comb, and a prayer devout,
And I was off to spend the night
With the kiddies while Mother and Dad stepped out.

The little Black Bag, it lasted long.
'Twas a family asset, a family pride;
A kind of a cradle song
For the kiddies I gathered so near my side.

But the little Black Bag was worn and bent
As a change in the family die was cast;
Like the owner who came and went,
It was dropped by the years into the past.

Poetry

Poetry is but the froth tossed off
From deeper feelings hidden
In the caverns of the heart;
There are no signs, no words
Can give the soundings of a flow
Spent by despair, streaked through
With deeper sighs;
Silence alone distills the bitter woe,
And poetry abounds, while the heart cries.

Tears

These are no idle tears
That dance into my eyes
As sudden raindrops do
From out the darkened skies.

These tears have soaked through
All my being in their flow
Of cleansing power,
And every sentient Earthly woe
That would my soul devour,
Is drowned by them and disappears.

Yearnings

Yearnings but pulsate
In the human heart;
Aside from colors vibrant on the air
They have no form,
In truth they bear no part.

Longings but gather in the human breast,
Waste matter of this mortal mind.
They smoulder on
Forever at unrest.

Why

Why do I wabble to and fro,
And try so valiantly to go,
Yet like some drunkard on his feet,
I cannot make my senses meet
Upon the path I know?

Why do I bicker with my head,
And try to argue death, instead
Of life, and peace, and perfect poise?
I seem connected with the noise
Of all Earth's underfed.

Musings

Ache heart! What right have you
To hold a universe in tow,
To make a wish come true
To ease your woe?

* * *

When I depart shall I be living,
Or shall I be in truth
Among the dead?
Only the so-called living bury
The so-called fled;
Count me alive and giving
Love to my best beloved.

* * *

I put a plaster on my heart tonight,
Poor heart — so sad, so sore, o'er Earthly griefs —
It drew the tears to surface sheets;
Like raindrops in a sudden flight,
It washed away some false beliefs,
And left it healed — such strange retreats!

The Monotonous I

I wish to say with modest grace,
In brief, to state the woesome case
Of one increasing o'er supply
That comes of oft-repeated I.

This stalking form besets my way,
Beseeching favors every day;
'Tis I am this, and I am I,
'Till nothing seems so great, so high.

Oh, what can give a better sense.
Or aid in timely recompense
For dropping off the wily I
When thus it lurks as my supply?

I talk of I, and I, and I,
'Till people weary with a sigh;
If it could only perish — die!
This stale monotony of I.

But changing I to these or those,
Or we, or anything that goes,
Despoils me of the thing I chose;
A world-wide weakness makes me cry:
"The ego wins — it must be I!"

Thoughts and Words

Words are such futile things!
They only grasp at thoughts,
And leave them all unsaid,
But half expressed,
And wandering in the heart
Unclothed, unfed!

Little Things

Little thoughts that from above
Seek a way to grow,
Friendship's best exchange to prove,
Let them overflow —
Think them now.

Little words that softly wait
Callings from the few,
Shaping fortunes, curing hate,
Speak them — when you do,
Speak them now.

Little deeds of kindness done,
Fill a World with cheer,
Stop the heart aches just begun,
Dry the largest tear;
Do them now.

Nothing More to Say

There was nothing more to say —
Winds that swept the words away,
Left the heart like stubble, hay!
Closed the mouth for aye, and aye —
There was nothing more to say.

Poets

Believe them not —
This jolly company of poets —
They'll tease you, fret you,
Love you, hate you,
Then hold you in a tender,
Close embrace,
And somehow, just before you know it,
They're gone forever — and
Others fill their place.

Do Not Forget

If I should fly away some day
on summer breeze,
And leave you lonely, dear,
with naught to say,
Like birds when strange corteges pause
beneath their trees
Chirp only in a smothered
roundelay;
Let not your heart forget the
things we've said;
By them renew your life instead,
for they to life belong.

Just Tired of Living

Just tired of living — that is all;
Life like a blanket wet — a pall —
Hangs over me, a deadening wall —
That's all.
Just tired of living — will not see
Life's what we make it — meant to be
A winning game — a fire that we
Won't see.

A Dream

I had a dream;
I thought I fenced with Death:
And when he tripped me,
I sent a blow with stealth,
That pierced his arrantry,
And set me free.

Retreat

Let me sit quiet: then I can know
The wellsprings of my heart have found
their rest:
Let me be silent: then is it so
When my lone thoughts are at their
very best.

I Am Tired

I am so tired! Of what, of life?
Oh, no, not life itself but
All the little things that go
Toward keeping up this intricate
Machinery called life —
The body of this life!
It looks to me incessantly for
Inconveniences, as daily bath,
A breakfast, food for morning,
Noon and night and medicines
Perchance, should I of these
Indulgencies lose sight.

If

If I could come to you
When things of life go wrong,
That ready smile you give
So bright like fresh-brushed drops
From morning's dew,
Would make me wish to live,
Would send an endless song
Into my heart, stop all discord,
As music soothes a weary breast.
All this — if I could come to you.

Expressing Moods

(color verse)

What color do I feel today?
In wild imagination's play,
By fancy in a riot led,
I pause — and dash my cheek with red.

What color do my thoughts portray?
Like soaring bird on crest of day,
In joyous mood — I stop to think,
And splash my cheek with vivid pink.

What color says my soul today?
The sky is low, and drab, and grey,
My feelings dull with life's abuse —
I'll paint my face with paler rouge.

Whence comes this color scale to bear
Upon the feelings I must wear?
Does nature call me like a freak
To thus bedaub my chin and cheek?

Not so — since feeling waxes strong,
And colors must to thoughts belong,
I'll plead for them an inward grace,
Not smear them loudly on my face.

Death

Death drugged me here to die;
I took his anesthetic;
I saw not land or sky;
But like the soul prophetic
That clings to every tie,
I woke me by and by,
And here again am I.

To My Dog

Poor little dog! You whine and cry,
And want to come inside out of the cold;
You seem to have a heart that like my own
Needs warmth in which to open wide
The valves that hold the part
Of you that cannot live — abide,
Out in the cold.

And —— So the World goes on —
With Winter's cold and snows,
With Summer's fire and heat,
With hearts both sick and well,
Determining the flows
Of opposites — complete —
And life's strange forces tell
The things that we are built upon.

Contemporary Poetry

A day there came,
When called away
By error's din and sway,
— And right of name —

I wrote some verse;
I tried to spare
The idea that I could care
For fortune's curse.

I stood aloof,
I tried to train
On sentences that sorrow-proof
Marked out my pain.

I would not sigh,
Nor feelings bare,
Tho' woes assailed me everywhere,
Stolid was I.

I wrote the verse,
I veiled the tear,
I let my agony appear
In sonnet terse.

Received applause for work of worth,
The product of a newer birth —
But cried because — — — — —

Oh, Heart

Oh heart, you say too much with little meaning!
Be still — be slow to feel such wretchedness
As you have felt for me;
Oh heart, I'd have you know
That all this pain is screening
That one bright spot aglow,
In this day's loveliness.

Who Understands Me?

Who understands the mystery
Of heart and soul and outerfold
Of fleshly form called its
Consistory?

My life, the things I undertake,
Prove but a little fledgling's hold
On problems oft-times seen
In errors wake.

Not ever till the answer stressed
Of a good conscience — soul renewed —
By Spirit led — can I be known —
Be self-expressed.

Right Thinking

When the curtain of my consciousness
Draws quietly aside,
When I behold in righteousness
Where thoughts — right thoughts abide,
Then comes the Trinity to prove
Right thinking rises on the tide
Of knowledge gained in Life, Truth, Love,
Three gates to Heaven — that open wide.

Busy Hands

Mine have been such busy hands;
Hands that never faltered tho' the
Work of years was filled with
Duty-bearing days of such demands
As love fulfills; nor seek they
Medals carved with high awards.

Come!

Come life, come daylight, to my sight!
Shine Sun, shine stars, within my heart!
Turn, darkness, into flames of light!
My soul has neither place nor part
In this dull scheme of Earthly woe,
Where flitting forms must come and go
through dim twilight.

To Myself

When Fancy spins a web that flies
Where rhyme and reason lost within it,
Will all go sailing to the skies,
Without the warning of a minute;
Help me, oh, keeper of my wits —
If brains and wits I haven't any,
Then stay my heedless, hopeless fits,
From fields unwise, and flights uncanny.

My Songs

My songs are sung in nameless rhyme,
Untouched by sound, unchanged by time,
My heart beats out the music fine,
And rhythmic thought proclaims the line.

I Must Be Thankful

I must be thankful for a house to keep,
I must be thankful for a bed to sleep;
I should be thankful for my bread and butter,
Thankful for words my lips can utter;
Thankful for prayer, a way to Heaven,
And thankful that my sins are shriven;
With "all-out" thanks in Duty's store,
Comes nothing more I should be thankful for?

My Higher Self

While this poor mind disturbed by dreams,
Amidst the phantoms of this lower World,
And this sad soul enfolded in the seams
Of flesh, resistless, in its meshes curled;
Myself — my higher self — the only I
That lives above, beyond, this transient sphere —
That sees the God-crowned sons that never die —
Rests satisfied; at peace; no dreams appear.

Looking Outward

Your Face

Some lines will come into your face,
From thoughts long drawn,
That work with steady pace,
Downward — forever down —
Persistent, determined to destroy,
To rob you of your joy,
And print a frown's disgrace,
Upon your well-loved face.

The Heavens declare the glory
Of all that God designs;
Your face reflects the story,
(Is His best inventory)
Without the trace of lines.

Reputation

His reputation is so clean,
Above all sordid, small device,
An angel would not be so mean
As change his life at any price.

His manhood is so pure and good,
So sifted of each fleshly lust,
That Satan would not if he could,
Be tempting him — tho' try he must.

She Was Faithful Unto Death

Eyes with looks aloft and shining,
Poised between that wingéd breath,
She had heard the Master calling,
And was ready unto death.

She had left undone no duty.
"Love was sweet to me," she saith.
Love received her latest message,
She was faithful unto death.

A Christmas Card

When Christmastime is drawing near,
And thoughts begin to gather,
Of friends and all I hold so dear;
Come snows, or rain, or wintry weather,
I find my heart grows warm as ever,
A'wishing we could be together.

The Righthand Path

Brother keep to the righthand path —
It leads to knowledge, purity,
And unknown wealth; it is the lath
That holds the frame of this frail
Under-self, and straightens out
The road to lasting health.

Let Us Be Brave

Let us be brave!
No matter if the soul's revealing
Grim fear into a life has cast,
No matter if the shadows stealing,
Be of the present or the past.
Let us be brave!

Let us be brave!
No matter if hope's only token
Be shifts of light but dimly seen,
No matter if the pitcher broken,
Comes never from the well again,
Let us be brave!

You Are Right

You are right!
You always are;
While I am looking for a star,
You behold the best in sight.

Fishing-Boats

And boats come in, and boats go out —
Some sails remembered, some forgot —
But fisher-wives the day throughout,
Know when their boats come in — come not.

An Alibi

The Christ tho' cast in human mould,
Was perfectness unfelt, untold
To grasping hearts by sin controlled,
Led by Earth's waywardness.
His sorrows of the purest kind,
Were all for those who could not find
The way, the truth, the life, the mind,
The love which He designed.

The Christ — the man — was born to see
The light of staid eternity;
He could not know the man like me
Who fights his way unsteadily
To gain a foothold in the land to be.

Autumn

Erstwhile the Autumn meant to me
Soft winds, reprieve from summer's heat,
A harvest moon that topped a tree,
A color-splash of forestry
Viewed from a rumble seat.

But now the Autumn means to me
Just seven days across the main —
A lowered gang-plank — pockets free —
With passports cast into the sea!
My country — Home again!

A Lullaby

Do you recall an evening when —
I think the hour was nearing nine —
You climbed into my lap, and then
Two sleepy eyes looked into mine;
You smiled, contented with your lot,
Your baby troubles all forgot;
I sang a lullaby — your choice —
You slept — to praise my crooning voice.

Do you recall a yesterday —
I think the twilight lamps were lit —
You came to me the same old way;
But eyes were weary, brows were knit;
A woman tired with Worldly care,
You sought my lap and nestled there;
I sang the same old lullaby,
You slept — my voice became a prayer.

A Bird With a Broken Wing

I feel such grief o'er a bird with a broken wing;
I feel so sad that the little thing
Has been clipped of its passage through the air;
Bereft of its feathers, its songs of cheer —
Sitting in solitude.

Poetic Fancy

You try to read the poems of the great!
You who never shed a tear,
You who own some vast estate
Where poverty nor pain appear;
You try to read with seeing eye,
And his sad songs commiserate,
Who never felt a poet's sigh,
Nor came to suppertime too late!

Decoration Day

Rises my thought to realms of consecrated bliss
That knows no grave-sounds such as this;
High over still forms mouldering here
Soars my bright hope with gladdening cheer.

Clearer my shining faith that sees no idol lost,
Far from this time-worn sense with sin engrossed;
Breathing above the clouds, the broken sod,
Rests my freed thought and finds it's beloved in God.

Stronger the love that lifts the o'er-burdened heart,
Out of its dream of death and sensuous smart
Of deadening pain and re-occurring griefs,
To know that life is everlasting Love—
Not strange beliefs.

The Mona Lisa

Why stand and rave—discussing
The Mona Lisa—
Upon her charms of hidden worth,
Drowned in a smile of enigmatic birth
That won't release her.

Why waste your time bewailing
A woman's glory—
Where features falter, fail to tell
What she herself must know so well—
Her own life's story.

Would it be well—forgetting
The Mona Lisa—
To seek the pattern of a smile
In some sweet soul content the while
To love and please her?

Truth Is Precious

When some one comes to me
In serious hour,
I try to tell him what the truth might be,
Nor cast a pearl in dim uncertainty,
Where swine devour.

Parting

There shall be a pause to make
Before my soul takes off
To that far land, there to awake
To better life:
But when I feel the coming rift
Which separates us for awhile,
Take hold my hand — the sands may shift,
The time be brief
That holds the seconds of an Earthly tie,
But we shall fill them with the joy
Of hands tight-pressed — our strength on high,
In God — above all grief.

Dear Star

If I talk to you, dear star,
Of my loved ones gone before,
Can you tell me through the spaces,
Can you tell me where they are?

If I talk to you, dear star,
Of the hour of the day,
When my soul in brighter places,
Shall be seeking them afar,
Will you light me on the way,
Can you tell me this, dear star?

Friendship

My friend, I cannot trespass on your heart,
Nor try the strings that fit its melodies
So beautiful, they are a world apart —
Belonging to yourself — your minstrelsy.

I must not try to bring myself to see
That songs that make your daily life so full,
Might haply give the same sweet joys to me,
Of fill the voids in my sequestered soul.

If I should mar your usefulness
By one discordant sound,
The falsity of selfishness
Would wound — forever wound.

Love Me, Love My Songs

You spurn my poems with a yawn,
You'd have them laid upon the shelf;
On me alone you'd like to fawn,
With me alone amuse yourself:
But as the old time adage goes:
"If you love me you love my dog,"
We won't be friends but always foes,
Who sees myself without my songs.

Rebuked

Well, push me in the background of your thought —
Perhaps I need to stay there for awhile;
If you can do without a look — a smile —
I can but learn the lesson I am taught.

Illusions

Let not your thoughts become
Outlined in arabesques
Of such uncertain form
That they in league with dreams,
Take on, be one
With dreams — a motely lot —
Illusions that must be forgot.

The New Year

The New Year comes with promises most rare,
The Old Year takes them unfulfilled away;
We enter on the New with anxious care,
We drop the Old — we speed the parting day.

The New Year comes with soul-renewing cry,
The Old Year leaves, the soul has been its toy;
We enter on the New, nor question why
We let the Old Year take such toll of joy,

Contrasts

She was so cold, so spiritless,
So beautiful without desire,
With heart too prone to listlessness
To ever feel a living fire.

She was so warm with gentleness,
So gaily sweet, a perfumed flower
That bloomed with soul of cheerfulness,
And filled the Earth with love's own power.

Mummies

I saw a mummy lying with the cryptic dead;
I saw a mummy — but its life had fled;
I saw a mummy — walking on the street;
I saw a mummy — dead, yet on its feet.

Give Me My Brush

To sweep some color on a canvas slide —
Some warmth outside my feelings drawn
In stale monotony of cold and wounded pride;
Here I can spread a few bright threads
Of red and blue by blowing up the sounding-board
Of nature's bellows, and sit and revel in her
Higher notes — keyed to perfection — of these,
My fellows.

Never Mind

Never mind your sorrow's wailing,
Bright wine appears from grapes pressed dry;
Never mind the winds prevailing
From the North that seem to try
To stop the soul's courageous sailing
Into estuaries nigh;
Red will be the wine of sorrow,
Still'd will be the winds tomorrow,
When you cease to cry.

Morning-Glories

Morning-glories, why flaunt your aprons
Of bright symbolic color in my face?
Is it to make me know that Heavenly blue—
That sign and signet of an inward grace—
Has set its seal upon your flowery forms
To tempt my brush to imitate the Infinite,
To copy life—to paint a smile that warms?

Oh, morning-glories, wave your hands at me!
Point your soft fingers—try to make me see,
That beauty in each trailing vine
You run across my canvas, is divine.

November

November is the saddest time in all the years;
The shriveled leaves drop from the trees
like human tears;
Like thoughts that loose their hold
on cherished spot,
Thwarted of life—they, drifting down
On chill November breeze,
Lie still and rot,
Counted as naught—forgot!

My Flowers

When winds blow from the North,
And my flowers drop their petals
in the late fall,
They are stark and stiff within
their bowers,
And they cry for sustenance,
Don't you, my flowers?

But when bright days come forth,
And winds blow from the South,
Awakening Spring's breath,
You are happy in April's showers,
Aren't you, my flowers?

Look Up

Look up — the fields are green with growing grass,
And flowers bloom in every nook in our fair land;
For now that winter has begun to pass,
The springtime holds the wand within her hand.

Look up from sordid cares and bended knees,
From griefs untold that keep the heart at bay
And seek relief from every one of these
By looking up, and out, and far away.

Look up, or you will miss the curtain's spread
Of things of beauty that surround you in a day;
A smile may flash — a friendly footstep tread
So near — yet seeing not, you let it haste away.

Look up — dear heart — your vision — hold it clear!
For everyone must dream, and do, and dare!
Else life will pass, the seasons disappear
While you look down, not up, all unaware.

Day and Night

Lord! 'Tis a lovely day,
Thoughts can but Heavenward stray;
God! 'Tis a lonely night;
Hades — and Heaven away.

The Ragged Robin's Lament

Poor Ragged Robin bends his head
Dejected in the flower bed:
"Why was I made like this to dress?"
(His tears he scarcely can repress) —
"My seed forever homely grow;
Why was I planted in this row,
A ragged ugly kind of show,
Where handsome plants in fine array
Can see my poverty and say,
'Look at the Ragged Robin there;
He never has had much to wear!' "

The Lighthouse

Tho' white waves rising high,
Dash frothing foam against
The lean rocks on the shore;
Tho' wind and rain beat out
The brightness that they wore;
Stands the great Lighthouse,
With its gleaming tower,
Beckoning, through mists and gloomy skies,
The sailor in his trying hour,
And cheers the man who flies.

Perversity

With the hoar-frost on the mountain,
With the snow deep in the valley,
While the winter winds are bringing
Bitter songs of discontent;
Why, oh, why should I be singing
Gay as bird upon a fountain,
When the snow is in the valley,
And the hoar-frost on the mountain?

When the tender Spring is coming,
When her hands have washed the hillside,
When she calls to life the sleeping,
Beautifying everything;
Why, oh, why should I be weeping
Like a sad musician strumming,
When her hands have washed the hillside,
When the tender Spring is coming?

Let Me Sleep

Deep sleep it is that brings relief
From all that I abhor;
From senses sore, ablaze with grief
At sight of blood, and pride of war;
God! I could weep!
But let me sleep, deep sleep!

Seagull

Lonely bird on rocky coast,
    Where is thy mate that cried to thee?
That hither flew when storms were worst,
    And floated by thy side at sea?

Lonely bird on sandy shore,
    Where are thy lately nested young?
Have they so winged the ocean o'er
    As to forget the songs you sung?

Lonely bird, where breakers beat
    Thy tireless body searching through
Its restless foam for things to eat,
    I've courage when I think of you.

Earth's Guests

When I become a guest of Mother Earth
Pressed close against her bosom's fruitfulness,
Beneath the shadows of her shady trees,
Then I shall share in sweet forgetfulness,
Her solaces — and merge my dust with these,
Her guests, who rise again so fed,
Refreshed, by her resourcefulness
They gain new life, new form and usefulness
By having sojourned near the so-called dead.

Satisfied

We must be satisfied with what life gives us,
Not try to run the Universe,
With all its hopes and fears,
To make it tally with a wild ambition,
To cut a special pattern for our wares,
Which may be good or bad, who knows?
Who cares?

I Love April

I love a rainy day,
Therefore I love April;
I love the mist and spray,
Seen on an upland way
When it is April.

I love the moist Earth's sigh,
Therefore I love April;
There comes within an hour,
A cloud, a storm, a shower—
For such is April.

I love the Springtime near,
Therefore I love April;
When bird and bush appear
Bedrenched with rain, I cheer
The griefs of April.

I love a promise due,
Therefore I love April;
She sobs and weeps, 'tis true,
Her calling seems to rue,
But comes—our April!

A Mother Robin

A mother robin made a nest
Upon a tiny tree,
The robin sang her very best,
She sang: "Chee, chee, chee, chee."

The mother robin laid an egg
Within the little bed;
When tiny tongues began to wag,
They said: "Chee, chee," she said.

Bewildered

When my heart counts its lonely beats,
And feels like drying sands, spread white and wide
At low tide on some long forgotten shore,
Where little winds stir only surface sheets
Of little wrinkled waves that come, divide,
And leave small impress of the forms they bore;
So does my heart seem slow to learn its way
Out from the sands, the winds, and ocean's spray.

Intimations of Springtime

Look! Look! The early Spring has brought
A violet above the Earthy mould,
So full of life and strange intent to grow,
As though it blew straight from
Some lip whose outerfold
O'ercame the dream of death, and so
Redeemed itself by sending up
Enriched, a flower fair —
Sweet symbol of the Infinite.

War Song

"I shall sit in the Emperor's chair!"
Thus spoke a cadet, unaware
That a fun-loving country at war
Has a task to perform long before
His audacity seeks to dethrone
A monarch so mightily grown.

"I shall sit in the Emperor's chair!"
These words in the mouth of a child —
But wisdom dressed up in a style —
No respector of person the while,
Our troops have the temple defiled,
In truth siezed the Emperor's chair,
And America sits down over there.

Rest

When my heart seeks a sheltered rest,
It soars above some daring mountain height,
Where storms are wont to lose their bent —
Far up to where the eagle plans her nest,
Protects her young from thunderbolts of fright,
And peace and quietness seem Heaven-sent;
So shall my heart acquire the highest, best,
Its happiness — and then its fruitfulness.

A Star May Set

Those eyes look in upon my soul
And ask me questions I would fain ignore;
How can I tell them of my poor control
That stalks me through some inner door?

Those eyes look in upon my heart
And try to probe the number of its beats;
How can I dare destroy the tears that start,
How can I speak of Life and its defeats?

Those eyes look words I cannot answer yet:
Perhaps this universe or distant space
Will sometime shed a light — a star may set,
And bursting, show to us a trysting place.

I Know

I know that every little bud
That turns into a flower,
Is but the growing of a thought
Into a higher power.

I know that every little prayer
That starting, seems to quiver,
Will gain momentum on the air,
And hold a life forever.

Progress

I have allowed myself too many liberties!
Allowed some looser things to intercept
The constant flow of thoughts made into deeds,
That greater grow, and grow,
Into that upper strata of a life.

The Sun Went Down

The Sun went down upon my day;
The Moon came up — its light was dim;
And soon all light had passed away,
For Sun and Moon went out with him
And set for aye.

Birches

I love the friendly Birch,
When gracefully and tall I see it rise
Through greening pines,
Waving white arms to summer skies,
Or cousining in clumps in bent outlines,
It whispers confidences — sweetest Birch.
I love the dainty Birch,
Tho' wonderfully clad in sheerest white,
Akin to nudity, no fears alarm,
When Winter starts its blights,
Its purity is changeless, and it bears
No season's malice — peerless Birch!

Chasing Butterflies

Why chase the winged butterfly,
Your joys to gain, your hopes to try?
To dust he falls within your hand,
And gasping, dies at your demand:
The brightest color that he wears
Is deadened by relentless tears
Your careless spirit sought to win,
Regardless of the unspoken sin
Of killing out immortal ties,
By chasing flitting butterflies.

Heroes

To think — his gallant boyhood lost
Upon a sordid battle field,
With guns alone to count the cost
Of sons like him who would not yield
To despots' whims!
These sons — symbolic of a cause
Upheld by God! Not man-made laws.

On Reading of Japs Executing American Soldiers

So dastardly the deed,
The Heavens screamed their protest,
And Christ forgot to say amen —
Without a creed —
And Love gave up the Ghost
As hope died out again
For want of man's humanity to man.

War Trophies

Homeward thy spirit fled,
Glad to be on its way;
Freed from a field of dead,
My darling — so lately wed —
My love of yesterday.

The Jeep

That little jeep he drove!
Strange — it looks like him —
So strong its power of build —
Empty, it stands above
The mountains crusty rim,
Just as his hand had willed,
Empty — its driver gone —
His medals won!

Too Late

It came too late —
This sudden glow,
That sets alive life's living flame,
And calls my being forth to know
The hidden depths it could not name.

The fire that smouldered underneath
A frame so frail, inadequate,
Was fanned by winds that tore its sheath
Of cold reserve — its latent state,

And broke the frozen bounds of love —
Of self absorbed in selfishness —
And now great wastes rush on to move
My soul to its destruction.

Why Cry

Why cry? Your tears would make a soldier weep
In his own grave; he lies asleep,
Rested from labor and the battle's roar,
The strength he gave, and now that it is o'er
For him, he counts not Death as his defeat,
It won him life — a life replete with higher gains;
He saved a World — his recompense — his flag unfurled.
So weep not bitter tears in his defense,
Crying is out of place.
He knows the way that Spirit takes
Beyond this space — where life is fed with
Everlasting love — not dread
Which fills the spot where hate awakes
And seeks to move! now he can tell
That in his latest flight, "God doeth all things well."

He sends this message from a faultless sky:
"I am the Way, the Truth, the Life." Why cry?

Vacancy

Even Nature has abhorred
A vacant spot;
So far, she never has forgot
There is no vacancy
'Twix God and me.

When Love Has Right of Way

When Love has right of way,
There is no great display
Of words or driving power
To overcome an evil hour
Of man's disconsolation;
For when Love gains the right of way
'Tis Everpresence come to stay
In silent operation.

Friendship's Pages

Nothing can clip the edge of
friendship's pages;
I write my name upon the leaves of your
soul's book,
And tender memory engages
the time it took.

My Sister

She writes in such a merry strain,
She says: "Hah! Hah!" in all her letters;
She never mentions hurt or pain,
And naught but sunshine ever scatters;
I sometimes think a saint has kissed her,
And you should meet her — this, my Sister.

Seclusion

There are things that we must suffer,
There are pangs that we must bear,
When no Earthly friend can offer
Balm to soothe the heart's despair.

There are moments of rejoicing,
There are whispered prayers profound,
When there is no time for voicing,
Where a Savior's love was found.

Close-Pressed

If I could press you to my heart just once,
Just for a moment let you lie close-pressed
As flowers within a book
Lie pressed between its leaves,
Then you would stay within my memory,
Where I could see your face, your every look,
And hold the imprint that my heart so weaves
Of all I thought I could not thus renounce.

Eyes

Those eyes! Those eyes! Those wonderful eyes!
Indeed they're my soul's paradise;
They are life, they are truth, they are Heaven above,
Oh, eyes that I love.

Freedom

When I am laid within that darksome quietness
Down, down beneath the grass, the daisy's bloom,
When both my eyes have closed in tiredness,
And rest comes sure and certain in the tomb,

Oh, look not then upon my nothingness,
That body fixed and rigid in its death,
For out of this grim earth-born frigidness
My soul has risen — breathed a freer breath.

Cupid

(A Valentine)

Cupid, that strange short-sighted elf,
Has taken all my better self
And thrown it at thy willing feet;
How can I gather back his pelf?
I cannot bide a common cheat
That sets my heart at naught,
And tells thee all its simple thought;
I would not have thee know too well
What love hath done to me, my dear,
But Cupid — he hath deigned to dwell
Within my bosom with his spear.

Awakening

It will be just a little crossing,
A faint sweet breath or two,
And the dew on my brow in passing,
Will lightly dissolve from view.

There shall be no shadow tracing
The way that I must go,
But a wonderful all-embracing
Sunlight in its latest glow.

One clasp of a hand at parting,
So soft — of one who waits,
Will tell of the tearless starting,
Of my soul to its new estates.

Then a smile, as the moments waning,
Sever the mortal past —
Nothing of Earth remaining —
Death — and a life recast.

Wild Geese

When I can see the wild geese
Flying toward the North,
I look upon the sky and know,
A change is coming forth.

When I can see the wild geese
Flying toward the South,
I know that wintry winds will blow
Bad weather in his mouth.

When I can see a hard face —
Furrowed, and cold hard face —
I glance and quickly can discern,
Just what is taking place.

When I can see a sweet face,
Beaming with smiles akin
To that bright light in Heaven that burns
To show the soul within,

I can but thank the Lord
For wild geese faring forth,
To climes more suited to their needs,
Knowing the South, from North.

Mated

What is it to be mated? Is it so
When love's eternal sense has risen
In hearts less torn by sensuous ties
Of washed-out dreams, a fleshly prison —
Behold truth wedded in the vaulted skies
As man supreme — as man and woman,
Mated in Heaven as angels are?

Clouds

Look at those clouds in their majestic race across the skies!
Little they reck of all Earth's woes and human cries!
Soulless they sweep in darkened densities —
in sullen gloom —
To shadow forth a world's iniquities — a nation's doom.

Dog Tails

Once I thought it cruel, brutal,
To cut a dog's tail from his spine —
To take his language as a total,
And leave his voice alone to whine:
But since I heard a tin can rattle,
Bound tightly to his tail to drag,
Saw horror in his poor eyes settle,
'Tis best, I think — no tail to wag.

Maya

In the Maya of tomorrow,
We shall sit and sing away
These same songs that we are singing
In the Maya of today.

Whether joy or sorrow bringing,
These illusions holding sway,
Never cease deceptions — flinging
Chaos in a World's decay.

Remembrance

Over the wastes of time
Come slumbrous thoughts
Of a life long gone:
Of a time when we loved
In a golden sun:
But the mists and the clouds
Broke the dream we were in,
And we are two herein,
Instead of one
In that life long gone —
Estranged in a hoplessness,
We are two — not one.

Mothers

No matter when the World began,
No matter when the World shall end,
A mother's times are in her hand,
Her deeds shall speak, her life defend;
Her lost are loved, and just the same,
Her works go on in mercy's name,
To higher ends and better gains
She yet has taken for her pains;
No wonder she can understand
In Wisdom as it once was planned:
"God doeth all things well."

Standing By

I see him always standing by,
In the shadows, soon, or late,
When the storm-swept winter sky
Hides the joys for which I wait,
When the sunlight stays my sigh,
Always — he is standing by.

"While the World Stands"

"While the World stands,
I'll eat no meat that makes
My brother to offend";
I'll drink no wine
That sparkles in the cup
Upheld by foe or friend;
Nor will I choose to sup
On viands from the hands
Of sin — however fine.

While the World stands,
My brother's hand I'll hold,
Nor speak a wicked word,
Nor revel in a deed
Unkind, so overbold,
That it will sow the seed
Of injuries absurd.

Good meat shall grace my table
to the end
That he and I be able
To eat and not offend.

Big Little Sisters

I still can see the pinafore
With little strings that tied behind
A gingham dress — the dress she wore
The day I gave the reprimand.

I see the proudest smile she wore
When one small culprit passed the test,
And one loved brother made a score,
A guiltless score — at her behest.

Big Little Sister waved the flag
Of truce to watchful motherhood
When pinafores began to sag,
And threaten rifts in babyhood.

Big Little Sister, torn aside,
Has long outgrown that childish band;
In weal for others scattered wide,
I still can see that leading hand.

To all Big Sisters in the World
God give a flag of truce — unfurled.

Eyes

I never saw such lovely eyes,
To have no light within them.
To have no thought, no sweet surprise,
No tears to ever dim them.

I never saw such lovely eyes,
So large, so round, and tender,
With lashes lifted to the skies,
But blind — may Heaven defend her !

God's Ways

Perhaps these silent, lonesome days
Have drawn me closer to Thy side,
Oh, Lord — to learn of Wisdom's ways;
So weak the will, I might have died,
But Thou in accents strong and true,
Broke up the dream — gave better view
of life and Heaven.

When

When the roll is called up yonder,
(If any roll there be) —
And the saints have ceased to ponder,
(If any saints there be) —
I'll be there to share the story
Of that everlasting glory,
(I'll be there, maybe).

Finis

We seem to have no language,
you and I;
Our words are clothed in silence:
not a sigh
From lips encased in virtues smile;
not a cry
Lest ears not tuned to love, defile
The sanctuary of that smothered breath,
Where hope meets Death.

Looking Upward

The Message

How can I speak the message clear,
Christ gave to save the weaker soul,
How can I point to His red side,
When blood drips from my own in fear,
Or tell how brave was He who died
To save us — when I see my goal
So far away, my heart so tried.

Yet I would tell to friend or foe,
The peace that cometh in a day,
When we can ponder on the Word —
That tender Word man came to know —
As Jesus voiced what sinners heard:
"I am the Life, the Truth, the Way"—
God sent His son to make it so.

The Armor of God

Put on the armor of thy God!
His trumpet sounds no false alarm;
Thou shalt begirt it with His Word,
Lest thy soul's triumphs come to harm.
Put on the armor of thy King!
Thy call to arms has just begun;
And fiercely into battle fling
Thy girded strength — till all is won.

When You Came Here

When You came here within my heart,
My hopes arose in You;
I'd been a half-awakened thing,
Afraid to know my better part,
Afraid to grow, afraid to sing
Those sweeter songs, and true.

When You came here Your tender love
Brought messages to me;
I saw the World a living spring,
From which to draw, and drawing, prove
What I was meant to be.

When You came here, oh, Lord of mine,
Life came to Life, divine;
It permeated every vein,
Washed out the dross where it had lain,
And then my soul drank newer wine
When You came here.

Be Comforted

"Be comforted"— so said a still small voice;
The Earth is full of blessings warm with cheer,
And Heaven hath called us to rejoice,
That wrapped in stillness, we can be so near.

Mother Mary

Mother Mary look afar
Over ramparts of the Heaven,
And cast an anxious glance to see,
The way is clear, the gates ajar,
That when I come, my sins forgiven,
Thou'lt find a place for me.

Easter

Why peer within the sepulchre of some lost hope
And gaze upon the winding-sheet, the shroud,
Which holds together that for which we grope,
For which we ever pray and cry aloud?

When our dear Lord was dead they laid him in the tomb,
And Marys came and wept for his lost form;
Then saw an angel standing in the gloom,
Who pointed them to where the Christ had come.

Oh, risen Savior, on this Easter Morn,
Oh, Man who broke the still white bands of death;
Oh, Life that came from out that vigil, worn,
Oh, God above, anent that Higher Self,
Bend low, bend back again to Earth,
And kiss the infant thought to larger birth.

Alone?

Alone? Oh, not alone—
Along these weary years,
A friend hath held my hand
Close-pressed within His grasp;
Hath shielded me from fears,
Taught me to understand,
Holding to His firm clasp,
That I'm His very own.

Alone? Oh, not alone—
When days seemed darkly cast,
A Friend I learned to love,
Came swift with lighted flare
That swept the shadows past,
Lit up the seal I wear,
That marks me with the One.

First Fruits

The morn was bright,
My soul was gay,
I felt God walked toward me
In cool of day;
In the garden of my heart
I gathered fruit,
And gave to God.

Better So

It were better to forego
Some pleasures of the flesh,
inborn of clay,
Than taking all we can, or wish,
We lead the World astray.

It were better to bedew
The heart with hidden tears,
wrung out of sighs,
Than try to seek a way through fears
To live a life that lies.

It were better so to know
That joy, and peace, and love,
in God's good grace,
Mean purity, and Heaven above—
To see Him face to face.

We Pass On

We pass on to brighter days,
We sing songs of sweeter lays,
When the soul seeks higher ways;
When the heart looks up and prays
For the Sun's anointing rays,
We pass on to brighter days.

Blessings

Take this blessing which I send you,
'Tis a wordless, tearless thing;
But it will forever show you
What a blessing oft will bring;
Thoughts of cheerful, sweet believing
In a God that knows no grieving —
Nothing lost that's true.

I Had a Dream

I had a dream, dear God,
I felt your presence like a mind of super strength
Bend low and gather up the pain my heart had felt,
And then, dear God, at length,
The woe that lashed my soul
And kept my heart at bay,
Turned into joy that could control
Whatever else indwelt —
The flow of life — the whole of which
I know is Christ, the Way.

Then I awoke — the night sped on —
But I awoke to brighter dawn;
The dream of sorrow was so spent,
Came sense of peace, dear God, You sent.

A Light in the Valley
(Hymn)

See that light within the valley?
See the mist that, rising high,
Leaves the light my soul to rally
From the shadows drawing nigh.

See that light? Oh, light supernal!
Shine on my benighted heart,
Groping for the way eternal —
Light the valley — I depart.

Time

Time is the sad deceiver of our ways;
It rushes in to where our roadway ends;
'Tis but the semblance of a friend who prays
That life be long — it ever tends
To fraternize, too often wed
With joys soon spent in life's illusive web,
Where time is fed.

But out of this grim sense of senseless days,
The Spirit shall construct a better sight
Of all these strange and intermittent ways
That argue time — not God, is right.

Give Me My Pen

An inkish shower upon a field of white
Somehow attunes me to the infinite,
By showing how dark thoughts will try to hide;
But ever on the sun-lit face of Heaven's divide,
'Mid glistening sands of light, I hope to hold
Sweet converse, without fetters,
With Him who sees and understands — and reads
My letters.

The Robe

I tossed the dice that won the Robe,
The seamless Robe Christ wore;
It did not fit a meaner form,
For it was made for royalty;
I could not fill a kingly role,
Nor wear a crown of matted thorns
That dripped with blood they bore.

What meant this seamless Robe to me?
I tossed for filthy gain;
I had betrayed the Infinite,
And sent His Son to shame;
I could not share His kingdom come,
While holding to the Robe I'd won,
Which He cast off in pain.

Forgive, oh, Chieftain of the air —
Forgive, oh, Man of Galilee!
I did not know the homage due
To Him who was to die for me;
That kings were born and infants grew
At Christ's command — and robes dispensed
To one who wears them righteously.

To My Beloved

If I could find you, my Belovéd,
I would start on upward wings tonight,
That adoration best be proved
By such a joyous, fearless flight.

If I could find you — ah, but here
Is where the flesh stands trembling, weak;
Grim shadows form, strange mists appear,
And hollow voices seem to speak.

If I could find you, my Belovéd,
I would forget the Earthbound way —
The images that self-evolved,
Sit meaningless on hills of clay.

If I could find you — Being solved,
And eyes full-turned to noonday light,
I would be with you, my Beloved,
Enwrapped in robes like yours — of white.

I Know That My Redeemer Liveth

I know that my Redeemer liveth,
I know the way He'd have me go,
I know the joys He ever giveth,
The pain — He would not have it so.

For far upon the mountain spaces,
The heights I have not reached as yet,
He waits while through each star He traces,
The light for me that ne'er will set.

Proving God

If God be in the heart
Well, prove it so,
And pity the upstart
Who clamors, "No!"

When fear has lost its hold
On every side,
And love its leaves unfold,
Spreading them wide,

Then comes a "still small voice"
None can deny,
Saying, "I am your choice,"
"I am the reason why."

How?

How can a blind man lead the blind
Through sun, or rain, or traffic trouble?
How can the dead inter the dead?
How can a sufferer unwind
The cord of pain or burst the bubble
That holds his kind in fetters dread?

How can a leopard change his spots
Without an unction from the forest?
How can the sweet forget-me-nots
Without the buds e'er reach the florist?

How can a sense perceive the Soul
Without the sanction of the Spirit?
How can a person love his house,
Not ever having lived within it?

Some Day

Someday the slender thread that holds a life
Related to all other lives will break;
The string that has so many knots become untied,
And fancy free, one soul now wide awake
Will wing its way, released from clay, and satisfied,
To where retouched, it rests to feed
In realms more suited to its spirit's need.

To the Archangel

"Well done! Thou good and faithful servant;
Enter the gates of Paradise, thy freedom won;
For thou hast earned a crown resplendent,
O'er sins of flesh — well done! Well done!"

But what of him with hand so rigid,
Who stirred the fires the night hours through
That warmed my heart when it was frigid,
Who urged me on — can he come too?

For I could never enter Heaven,
With placard bearing all my pious fame,
And write upon your scroll — forgiven —
Unless it also bore his name.

Omnipresence

Omnipresence, like a soaring bird
That hovers o'er the dim horizon's edge
Of human hopes that never can diverge,
Once gathered 'neath thy great unfailing wings,
Help me dismiss the present and the dismal dirge
Of time-worn sense, of tear-stained things
That cannot mount to thy bright endlessness —
And rid me of this utter restlessness,
Oh, Bird of Paradise!

God Is Everywhere

God is everywhere!
Erased from my brow
Is every mark of care
When I percieve that now
My God is everywhere:
Lo, He is here, and there.

God is everywhere!
No sorrow-laden thought
Can come or even dare
Disturb the mind God-taught,
That He is everywhere,
And sorrow is but nought.

God is everywhere!
No dizzy heights to gain,
No martyr's smile to wear,
No load to lose of pain,
No trumpet sound or blare,
Since God is everywhere.

God is everywhere!
So good, so bright, the day.
His presence ever near;
So plain, so sure, the way,
When I in Spirit's care
Know God is everywhere.

O, You

O, you who think the World's defense
Has hinged upon your sage advice —
Rich in your confidence, and made to feel
Great joys and gains immense,
Will come and help to pay for Spirit's weal,
The price of holiness —

O, you who lend the larger breath
To smaller souls that seek to grow
In Love's pure innocence, and hope to find
That Love is Life, not Death,
To all who come and wish to know
Of His beneficence —

O, you who washed so clean and pressed
So dry of dross and grim distress,
So pleased and blest, with pious flame
That burns in readiness
To singe the skirts of some faint soul confessed
Of sin — of waywardness —

O, you who touched the garment's hem
Of Him who held the circled rim
Of His full cup of wine; release the cup,
That I may clasp the stem —
May drink my portion — drink it up —
Then feel the flow divine.

The Mediator

Did Jesus die the death for me,
And did he hang upon a tree,
That I should ever go scotfree —
Saved in eternity?

Was this the price he had to pay,
Was this the only certain way
That souls like mine might safely say,
He saved a World that could betray?

Oh, Lord, who looketh from on high;
Who chose the flesh on Earth to die,
Help me to see the reason why
Thou camest a mortal, prone to cry.

Help me to know that sin's release
Cannot by pain nor proffered peace
Strained out of blood — a life's decease —
Add to another's life-increase.

Help me to faintly see the line
Where sin leaves off and love Divine
Becomes the cross — and so define,
The Life, the Way, the Savior's sign.

Repentance

"Oh, God, forgive my sin!"
The sinner cries;
Then God heals up the heart,
The tears He dries;
Repentance plays it part,
The punishment forgot—
But where's the sin's black spot?

Oh, if the Heavens could weep,
And vigils keep
O'er embryonic lies,
And angels seek
To stop the sad surprise
Of serpent's latest stings,
The Truth could crush these things.

Must I Empty-Handed Go?

Must I empty-handed go?
Must I meet my Savior so?
With no smile upon my face,
Lent by offerings of grace;
With no joys by which to trace
Deeds my hands fulfilled—
Idle hands and heart that willed
Nothing—never having lived.

Feed My Sheep

"Feed my sheep," the Master said:
Gently He laid his hand on a disciple's head:
"The way may seem so long, the road so rough to tread:
That thou wilt weary of these words and dread—
But feed my sheep, that in the famished throng
We may not count the dead."

"Feed my sheep," the Man of Sorrows told:
"Bleeding the lost one lies who dared desert the fold;
He hath so wandered in a path too overbold
That thou wilt find him sad, benumbed with cold,
But feed my sheep that in the days to come,
His story shall unfold."

Angels of the Face

Tonight I need God's angel of the face;
The very closeness of that Michael strength
That once prevailed o'er sin and won the race—
The power to hold a World in Spirit's length.

Tonight I need God's angel of the face;
That soft-voiced Gabriel sense of timely love,
That sits on high, a sovereign throne to grace,
His throne—to which my thoughts must ever move.

The Bride

Cometh the Bride adorned to be
Accepted of Infinity;
The Lamb of God hath led the way —
The twain shall walk in wedded bliss,
And God Himself will choose to stay
In this united consciousness.

Crossings

Give me your hand to hold, dear one,
I must not cross this turbid stream alone:
Your hand tight-held will make a stepping-stone
For all of me that has to cross so soon.

The Healer Saith

You come to me for comfort —
now to replace
Those sunken springs so
Drained of healthy flow
of nature's grace;
You come, somehow, for comfort —
knowing my strength
To lead you through the door
Where joys are kept in store
in Spirit's length.

You come to me, but oh,
see you no sign
Of scar upon my cheek
Where once so very weak
From nature's fine,
I begged for life, and oh,
deliverence
From sin, disease, and death,
And prayed with bated breath
for His beneficence?

Prayer Books

Give me that book of prayers!
Somehow my soul is out of tune today;
Perhaps another's thoughts in nobler cast,
Tho' flung upon the page in open way,
Delivered to the many — may at last
Find echo in my own affairs.

And prayer repeated word for word,
Tho' unfamiliar in the main,
May come to ease a conscience blurred;
By daily usage help attain
Through worshipful, prescribed refrain,
My soul's release from constant care —
Saved by the utterance of prayer
Some brother scored for me.

On the Way

Dear Lord, I've been a long time on the way,
As, counting time in troubles, heart-aches, fears,
I've stumbled forward wasting half the day
Unseeing good, for flow of blinding tears.

Dear Lord, thy patient hand hath stayed the rod
That might have felled me often where I stood;
Has this dear spoiling hindered me, oh God,
From running fast the race when'er I could?

Nay, Lord, thy mercies ever melt the dross
From stubborn heart that must and will repay
Thy kindness when I've learned to kiss the cross,
But now — I seem so long upon the way.

Love Songs

Birds sing love-songs from apple trees,
From boughs soft-swinging in the breeze,
And carelessly in joyous glee
Trill freely to their brides to be;
But birds are oh, so fetterless!
They warble not in bitternesss,
And never words from lips compressed,
Can rob them of loves truest test —
A heart-song sung within a nest.

Different?

We are so different — you the man — I the woman;
And yet, the true immortal graces blend,
That God has given us to keep in sacred form
Until His Son shall send the efflorescence
Of that high love profound where we become
As one — the merged of Spirit's own —
You the man, and I the woman.

The Bridegroom

Cometh the Bridegroom from his secret chamber,
Strong from his chosen conference
with the Infinite:
Now, he hath the testimony of a love
unending,
Born in the tabernacle of the Sun;
Now doth he rejoice in understanding
Of life, its laws — on Heaven depending.

Such Tenderness

There was such tenderness,
Such restful tenderness,
In those last words you spoke to me,
That soothed, this restlessness
Gave way and ceased to be.

The Underfed
(to the preacher)

Say to the World's most underfed,
That life is not what they would
Try to make it, never
In league with the unholy dead
Of burial places; never so hard
But shoulders bravely lifted
In God's good graces, can reverse
The error into conscience drifted,
Declaring good instead.

Found Wanting

Oh God, may this unseemly word
Be never spoken in my ear:
The balances be never turned
That weighs the soul by conscience blurred—
By sin's commitments here,
That in these scales are found.

But may an even stillness born
Of deeds and steady thought,
That filled the days that I have spent,
On these same scales be wrought,
That goodness never underweight,
Shall save my soul from want.

What Is Eternity?

Is it in measurement of days or years,
Or is it but the drop of Time
Into some moments filled with fears—
Of intermittent fears: the rythmic rhyme
Of fierce heart-beats: the soul-reports
Of joys divine, or foul defeats:
When can the count of Time's retorts,
Be known, be limited, be called Eternity?

God's Garment

Should my loneliness stretch out
too far,
Beyond the strength I hold that
can endure,
God grant that He will show me
how to wear
His garment with becomingness that
makes a cure.

"There Is a Fountain Filled With Blood"

I feel a fountain in my heart,
I call it joy unbounded,
From which no tears shall ever start,
No fears arise unfounded.

Do You Believe in God?

Do you believe in God?
Do you believe the Springtime showers
Will rinse a city of its dust and grime?
Do you believe the sod
Will send up grasses, new-born flowers,
In their appointed time?

Do you believe in God?
Do you believe the mellow moonbeam flitting
Around your house will cause you to rejoice?
Do you believe you heard
In that bright light where you were sitting
A call — a "still small voice"?

Do you believe in God?
Do you believe the bird — the sparrow,
Will find, unearth, the worm for him decreed?
Do you believe the Word
That made the way seem long and narrow
Meets every human need?

Do you believe in God?
Do you believe a love more tender
Than mother-love could hold you in its sway?
Do you believe it could
Become your life, your best defender?
Then you believe in God — today.

Oh, Mother of Mine

Oh, Mother of Mine, look down, look down!
Thy child is bowed with grief tonight;
No heart like thine to lean upon,
No hand to lead me to the light.

Oh, Mother of Mine, bend toward the Earth,
And whisper words so fraught with cheer,
That strength will rise above the dearth
Or hopes that seem to disappear.

Oh, Mother of Mine, which way, which way?
Thy child with Earth-born idols bound,
Hath lost the path in bright mid-day,
While thy freed spirit must have found

The answer to all mortal quests,
The end of pain — the soul's release —
As one of Heaven's immortal guests,
Oh, Mother, share with me your peace.

And ask the Lord, the Light of day,
To so remove my heart's desire
To tread upon these hills of clay,
That I shall feel the holy fire
Of that blest Word: "I am the Way."

God's Throne—His Kingdom

When saw you God upon His throne?
A man was dying on the road,
A good Samaritan came by,
Gave water to the striken one,
Gave of his mercy and his food,
Nor left the helpless man to cry;
Straight as an arrow from its bow,
An angel to its Maker flew,
And in humility bowed low:
"Thy Kingdom come, Thy throne is Love,"
He said — he knew!

Coming Home

No matter where my soul shall rest,
I must return to look upon your face;
So long as love is openly confessed
Upon your features where its signs I trace,
I will come home to you.

But should these emblems wear away,
Of that bright light I lived to see,
And your dear features fail to signal me
To feast upon your smile, by night by day,
I will not come again.

"Every Thing Is All Right"

"Yes, I know that all is right,
That angel voices ever speak
To him who valiantly would fight
To bring great goodness into sight —
But oh, the flesh is weak.

Yes, I know that all is right,
I fain would practice what I preach:
That righteousness takes no delight
In sin's refrain, in error's might —
But oh, the heights to reach!"

Can You Forgive?

Can you forgive, yet not forget?
Then you've not half forgiven yet:
Your stony heart is drugged to sleep
By that which makes an angel weep —
The stubborn will to hold and fret
O'er injuries you won't forget.

Might

When God has mighty works to do,
He fits a mighty soul,
And puts him in a mighty place,
And gives him such a heart as few,
Can grasp such mightiness,
And reach the mighty goal.

She

She is the Spouse of man;
The Love of which men write,
Men talk, men love to think;
She tries to guide whene'er she can,
The trend of his most innersight,
To one eternal fount to drink.

We Wander

We wander o'er the Earth,
We walk a little here, and there,
We write some nonsense, seek the mirth
Of foolish friends who ever wear
That same sweet camouflage — that play
Of careless laughter on the air,
That hides the heart in sad despair —
We wander, friends, so far away!

Works

'Tis what you do that makes the World
Sit up and look its best at you,
Not what you own of worldly goods,
Not what you have of beauty's store,
Not even smiles and clothes you wear,
Can draw the World's approving cheer
Like something done — accomplished here.

Christ Walked the Waves

Christ walked the waves,
The rolling waves,
That washed up fears to fisher folks;
Should we not then like one who braves
The storms, the winds, the tempest-strokes,
To walk alone, His faith to prove,
Call loudly on His love?

Charity

There's one thing I can not abide,
And that's religious sanctimony:
Yet I could never quite decide
To cast a stone — unrighteous smile,
Upon a sacred ceremony:
No matter where the "gavel" fell,
I had no better tale to tell.

Of His Kingdom

Does sorrow leave us where it found us?
Do we gain or lose? Beware!
When its woesome touch defies us,
When it strips the heart so bare,
Do we turn our rags around us,
Tie them loose and shiver there,
Or does a kingdom rise before us,
Where we hope to do and dare?